

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

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ORIGIN PA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PRS-01 SSO-00 CCO-00 /019 R

DRAFTED BY PA/M:KFITZPATRICK:KMF

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UNCLAS STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, MMOL

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL, AUGUST 11, 1976 HEADED "MINDLESS ARMS SALES".

2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNITED STATES AS THE CHIEF ARMS SUPPLIER TO THE THIRD WORLD, SELLING MORE WEAPONS ABROAD THAN ALL OTHER NATIONS COMBINED, HAS BEEN ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO CONCERN OVER THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS. BUT CRITICS ALSO HAVE PUZZLED OVER THE APPARENTLY MINDLESS CHARACTER OF THIS PROGRAM, WHICH HAS SEEN ARMS SALES JUMP FROM ABOUT \$1 BILLION IN 1970 TO MORE THAN \$10 BILLION IN EACH OF THE PAST THREE YEARS.

3. THAT MINDLESSNESS HAS NOW BEEN CONFIRMED BY A SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE STAFF STUDY OF IRAN'S PURCHASES, WHICH THE SHAH EVIDENTLY URGED SECRETARY KISSINGER LAST WEEK TO PERMIT HIM TO EXPAND FURTHER IN BARTER FOR OIL.

"U.S. ARMS SALES TO IRAN, TOTALLING \$10 BILLION SINCE 1972, HAVE BEEN OUT OF CONTROL," SENATOR HUMPHREY, CHAIR-

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

MAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, HAS WARNED.

4. PRESIDENT NIXON, THE STUDY SHOWS, MADE THE INITIAL DECISION "TO LET IRAN BUY (VIRTUALLY) ANYTHING IT WANTED" IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS DURING AN OVERNIGHT STOPOVER IN TEHERAN IN MAY 1972 - ON HIS WAY HOME, IRONICALLY, FROM COMPLETING THE FIRST STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TREATY (SALT I) IN MOSCOW. THE SENATE STAFF FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF SIGNIFICANT ADMINISTRATION STUDY IN ADVANCE OF THE DECISION.

5. EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER, THE DECISION'S IMPACT WAS TRANSFORMED BY A FOURFOLD INCREASE IN IRAN'S VAST OIL REVENUES - AND ITS ABILITY TO PAY FOR EXPENSIVE ADVANCED WEAPONS SYSTEMS. YET, AS IRAN'S MILITARY ORDERS SOARED, NEITHER THE NIXON NOR FORD ADMINISTRATIONS EVER RE-EVALUATED THAT SPUR-OF-THE MOMENT POLICY.

6. ARMS SALES TO IRAN STARTED THE PRACTICE OF PROVIDING THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WITH ARMS SO NEW THAT THEY WERE STILL ENTERING THE AMERICAN FORCES WHEN SHIPMENTS ABROAD BEGAN - A FAR CRY FROM THE HAND-ME-DOWN ARMS TRADE OF THE PAST. IRAN, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS BOUGHT AND BEGUN TO RECEIVE 80 F-14 JET FIGHTERS, EQUIPPED WITH COMPUTER-GUIDED PHOENIX MISSILES, A WEAPONS SYSTEM SO COMPLICATED THAT IT HAS BEEN HANDLED WITH DIFFICULTY IN THE AMERICAN FORCES.

7. SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH HAS BOUGHT \$6 BILLION OF AMERICAN ARMS AND HAS RECENTLY BEEN OUTSTRIPPING IRAN IN ARMS PURCHASES, HAS OBTAINED FORD ADMINISTRATION APPROVAL TO BUY ASTONISHING NUMBERS OF SOPHISTICATED MISSILES. JORDAN EVIDENTLY IS TO GET A \$540 MILLION SAUDI-FINANCED AIR-DEFENSE SYSTEM.

8. A CASE UNDOUBTEDLY CAN BE MADE FOR SOME ARMS SALES TO ALL THESE COUNTRIES AND OTHERS. BUT THE AMOUNT AND SOPHISTICATION OF THE ARMS NOW BEING SOLD TO BOTH SIDES IN TWO MIDEAST ARMS RACES - THAT BETWEEN IRAN AND THE ARAB STATES BORDERING THE PERSIAN GULF AND THAT BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND ISRAEL - IS UNDOUBTEDLY EXCESSIVE.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 199250 TOSEC 200328

ONE EFFECT IS TO CREATE A DEPENDENCY ON AMERICAN PERSONNEL AND SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY IN IRAN, WHICH MAY BRING ABOUT AN UNEXPECTED DEGREE OF LASTING AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT.

9. THE SENATE STUDY POINTS OUT THAT IRAN WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS ON THE GROUND FOR TEN YEARS OR MORE TO HANDLE PROCUREMENT, FINANCE, LOGISTICS, MAIN-

TENANCE AND TRAINING. IRAN WILL BE UNABLE TO GO TO WAR
"WITHOUT U.S. SUPPORT ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS."

10. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF EVIDENTLY IS NOW

MAKING A BELATED STUDY OF AMERICAN POLICY IN THE PERSIAN
GULF, INCLUDING ARMS SALES POLICY. THE PRESENT POLICY
CLEARLY CREATES UNACCEPTABLE RISKS OF AMERICAN MILITARY
INVOLVEMENT THAT MAY, IF NOT QUICKLY CHECKED, BE BEYOND
THE CONTROL OF CONGRESS OR FUTURE ADMINISTRATIONS. END
TEXT. ROBINSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS COMMENTS, ARMS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE199250
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KFITZPATRICK:KMF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760309-0400
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760863/aaaacdcy.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <03 JAN 2005 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS MATERIAL
TAGS: SOPN, MMOL, MASS, US, IR, NEW YORK TIMES
To: SECRETARY AIRCRAFT
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006